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New Mexico FSA Newsletter

New Mexico Farm Service Agency

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Albuquerque, NM 87109

www.fsa.usda.gov/nm

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Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

Looks like we are in for a cold wet winter. Just as a reminder to all livestock owners, please keep the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) in mind. This program compensates livestock owners for animals that have died due to an eligible adverse weather event such as extreme cold, excessive snow and blizzards.

Applicants are required to report a loss within 30 days of discovering the livestock death by: person, phone, email or fax.

Detailed supporting documentation is required to support any claimed losses. This documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- Vet records
- Dated photos
- Tax records

LeAnn Gibbs

District Directors:
Andrew Flores
Oscar Rivera
Brandon Terrazas

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

- Calendar/Producer Records such as a contemporaneous diary

Adequate documentation is a critical part of the program application process. Not having this documentation may cause a delay in receiving program benefits or cause your application to be denied. For more information, please call the FSA County Office

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address or zip code or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

Livestock Producers Reminded to Report Forage Losses by Feb. 1

USDA LFP Covers Eligible Grazing Losses Due to Drought and Wildfire

Livestock producers who suffered grazing losses that occurred throughout 2015 due to drought or wildfire are reminded that they have until Feb. 1, 2016, to report their losses and to enroll in the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP).

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately-owned or cash-leased land or fire on federally-managed land. Producers are eligible to apply for 2015 LFP benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture, annual ryegrass or forage sorghum. Livestock producers are encouraged to contact their local County FSA Office with any questions regarding specific forage crops that are eligible.

Livestock producers must complete the LFP application and required supporting documentation no later than Feb. 1, 2016, for losses that occurred throughout 2015. Producers who already have appointments scheduled require no additional action to meet the deadline.

Eligible livestock includes alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland.

For more information about LFP, contact your local County FSA Office**.** To find a local FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov. Visit www.usda.gov/disaster to learn more about FSA disaster assistance programs.

USDA to Provide Agricultural Credit Training, Expand Opportunities for Farmer Veterans and Beginning Farmers

USDA announced a partnership with the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) to conduct agricultural credit training sessions in the Midwest for military veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers. States under consideration to host the workshops include Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska.

These workshops will provide individuals interested in farming as a career, including military veterans, with methods to improve business planning and financial skills, and improve understanding of the risk management tools that can help small farm operations.

Other partners include Niman Ranch a community network of more than 700 independent family farmers and ranchers, and the Farm Credit Council and the Farm Credit System, which provides loans, leases and financial services to farmers, ranchers and rural businesses across the United States. The workshops will also include assistance with credit applications and introductions to local or regional food markets.

To learn more about veterans in agriculture, visit www.usda.gov/veterans. Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to learn more about FSA's farm loan programs. To find your local FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov. More information also is available from the Farmer Veteran Coalition at www.farmvetco.org.

USDA Improves Access to Capital for Tribal Farmlands with Multiple Owners

New Program Allows More Farm Loans for “Highly Fractionated” Tribal Land

USDA announced that it is expanding the availability of farm loans for Indian tribes and members to purchase tribal farmland that has multiple owners. The improved lending opportunities are possible due to new authority granted by the 2014 Farm Bill, which allows USDA to provide revolving loan funds to qualified intermediary lenders that can relend the funds to qualified tribes and individuals. The program becomes available today, Dec.1, 2015.

As a direct result of more than a dozen tribal meetings across the country, USDA is able to implement a solution to a longstanding barrier to financing, which will increase the availability of farm loans to Native Americans who want to start or expand a farming or ranching operation on Indian lands.

Under the 1887 Dawes Act, Indian reservation land was divided and allotted to individual tribal members such that with the passing of each generation, title ownership was divided and parceled among heirs, while the land was not. As a result, land once owned by a single person could today be owned by hundreds or thousands of individuals, resulting in what is known as “highly fractionated Indian land.” In many instances, landowners are unknown or cannot be located, which complicates the coordination of ownership or prevents the use of the property altogether. There are more than

245,000 owners of three million fractionated land interests, spanning approximately 150 Indian reservations.

Under the rules published today, USDA will now allow tribes and tribal members to submit a farm loan application to an intermediary lender. To participate, intermediary lenders first must be approved by USDA. The lenders may be private and tribal nonprofit corporations, public agencies, Indian tribes, or lenders subject to federal or state regulation (such as a credit union or other financial institution). FSA will lend to the intermediary, which will relend to the applicant. The intermediary lender also will administer the loan for the applicant.

Additional information on guidelines and criteria for intermediate lenders and how to file a loan application under Highly Fractionated Indian Land loan program will be shared Dec. 7, 2015 at the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) meeting and Tribal consultation in Las Vegas, Nev. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans or contact the local FSA county office. To find the local FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov.

USDA also has opened a 90-day period for the public to submit comments on this program. Written comments must be submitted by Feb. 29, 2016, at www.regulations.gov, using Regulation Identifier Number 0560-AI32.

Microloans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from $35,000 to $50,000, on Nov. 7, 2014. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

The microloan change allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional $15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to small and midsized farming operations.

To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers and ranchers access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans. **Important Note**: Microloans cannot be used to purchase real estate.

Since 2010, more than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers and FSA has increased its lending to targeted underserved producers by nearly 50 percent.

Please review the FSA Microloan Program Fact Sheet for program application, eligibility and related information.

Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Began Dec. 7

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that producers who chose coverage from the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting

Dec. 7, 2015, to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2016. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2016.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2016 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

The two programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov.

Playa Renovation on the Haynes Farm

Larry Haynes, a farmer from Holyoke, Colorado, talks about putting land “to its best use.” For decades he attempted to farm playas in his fields, but said he “rarely” was able to harvest crops grown in those wetlands. He decided to forget attempting to farm the playas; instead, he renovated them and planted large buffers around them, thus putting the playas “to their best use” as wildlife habitat. Hear his story in this short radio spot by Playa Lakes Joint Venture. Audio: http://pljv.org/radio_episodes/playa-renovation-on-haynes-farm-in-colorado/

***These spotlights are brought to you through USDA’s partnership with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture– The mission of Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) is to conserve the playas, prairies and landscapes of the western Great Plains — including portions of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. http://pljv.org/
